

November 16, 2020

**VIA E-MAIL**

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP  
Premier of Ontario  
Premier's Office  
Room 281, Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A1

## **Ontario's Restaurants Need An Industry Survival Taskforce**

Dear Premier Ford:

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants across the country have invested more than \$750 million in new procedures and training, personal protective equipment, sanitizer stations, air purification systems and other means to ensure the highest levels of safety for staff and patrons. National research indicates that 87 per cent of Canadians agree that restaurants are doing a good job of keeping us all safe.

Yet as Ontario continues to endure a second wave of cases, severe restrictions on indoor dining are being imposed on an increasing number of jurisdictions, without data pointing to restaurants as being the source of transmission.

Restaurants provide a safe alternative to private gatherings and government should be supporting their efforts to do so wherever possible. When jurisdictions experience rising cases, restaurants deserve to know why, and what they can do to continue playing an important role in the economic recovery of their communities.

On behalf of Ontario's vital foodservice sector, **we are calling on your government to set up a dedicated taskforce** to develop solutions that will ensure our industry's survival, including:

- **A framework for ensuring businesses facing significant restrictions are provided sufficient, efficient and effective aid** to survive and recover from the ongoing economic and public health crisis.
- **Joint communications materials and campaigns** to:
  - Reassure Ontario residents that restaurants provide safe alternatives to private gatherings; and
  - Promote takeout and delivery to show support for struggling entrepreneurs, restaurant staff and local food suppliers.
- **Data transparency and timely consultation**, so that businesses can better prepare and adapt to evolving COVID-19 response measures.

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Restaurants Canada proposes the creation of a taskforce comprised of political and public officials from the Jobs and Recovery Committee of cabinet, as well as industry leaders, each representing key segments of the foodservice sector (e.g., table-service, quick-service, drinking places and other business types).

### **Restaurants are key to an inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19**

Restaurants and the many small and medium-sized businesses that make up Ontario's foodservice sector are a critical load-bearing pillar of the province's economy. Before the pandemic struck, our industry comprised approximately 38,000 establishments, contributing 4 per cent to Ontario's GDP and serving more than 9 million customers every day.

Our industry also supports a wide variety of other businesses across the province, indirectly supporting more than 110,000 jobs and typically spending more than \$13 billion per year on food and beverage purchases, playing a critical role for Ontario farmers and the agri-food sector.

Restaurants are key to the province's COVID-19 recovery. Let's ensure we are doing everything possible to help them continue contributing to the economic and social fabric of their communities.

Sincerely,



Todd Barclay  
President and CEO

c.c.: The Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier & Minister of Health  
The Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance  
The Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade  
The Hon. Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries